

# Milford Crag

by Mark Turnbull

The crag is the back wall of a childrens playground on the east side of the A6; it is situated just north of the sharp bend over the river in Milford village, about 10km north of Derby. The wood-chip covered playground complete with swings, a slide, and a seesaw highlights Milford's reputation as the quintessential family crag.

The rock is a slightly friable gritstone, which is often green throughout the winter. However, it can make a pleasant evening venue in the summer, especially when combined with a visit to the Holly Bush inn. Recently, the local council has removed a lot of the vegetation and unearched a new face at the right-hand side of the crag.

## Parking and approach

The crag is next to the road and parking is available near the bridge on the small road which leads to Makeney. The playground and back wall are the property of Amber Valley District Council; but the top of the crag is owned by the residents of one of the adjacent houses. They are quite amiable towards proper climbers provided that they do not become nuisances. A fence, they recently placed to prevent children from wandering up the path behind the crag, can be scrambled around; however, this should be done with discretion so as not to cause annoyance.

**1 Si Sit Prudentia**  $\text{S}$  Unknown  
**23m** This is George Bowers original route. Start seven metres to the right of the back left-hand corner of the playground. Climb the wall to gain a broad, vegetated ledge and move leftwards into the corner. Climb the corner until it is possible to traverse leftwards through the water seepage to finish up the wall.

*The equally unpleasant wall to the right has no routes. To the right of it, the crag steps forward to give a better face with some altogether better*

O.S. ref. SK 352452 Alt: 165m

*routes which start roughly opposite to the playground entrance.*

**2 Verbal Narcotics**  $\text{S}$  1989  
**28m** Start up some vegetated ledges on the arête, trending leftwards past two helpful tree stumps to gain the obvious wide crack. Go up this on good holds to a pleasant swing out on to the arête, which is followed past trees to the top.

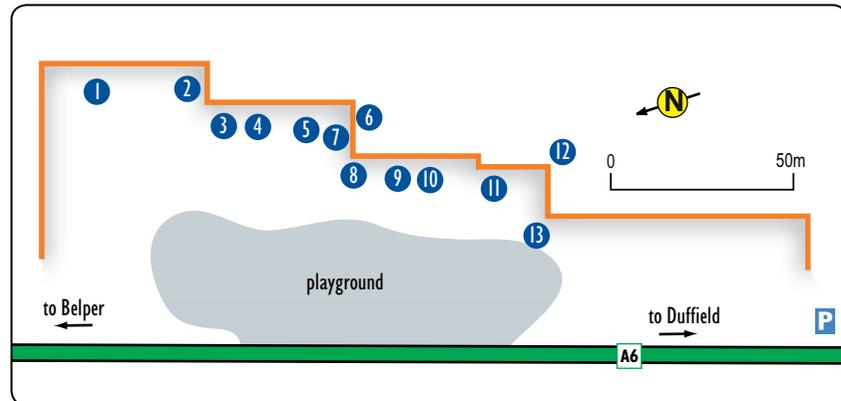
**3 Mouth Full of Monkey Nuts**  $\text{HVS 5b}$  1984  
**28m** About 9m to the right of the arête, and to the right of the foliage which was once the start to Pygmalion, is an obvious finger-crack which starts at three metres. This is followed to a ledge. To the left a large flake leads to a finish up the arête which Verbal Narcotics takes.

**4 Pygmalion**  $\text{HVS 5b}$  1955  
**28m** Start as for either of the adjacent routes to gain the narrow ledge. From the ledge, climb diagonally rightwards to a mantelshelf move below a small protruding overhang. Traverse delicately leftwards below a second, smaller overhang and ascend a short groove to the top.

**5 The Flypaper**  $\text{E1 5b}$  1955  
**28m** Start a short way to the right of Mouth Full of Monkey Nuts at an obvious flake; this is climbed to its top. Step to the right and climb the wall until a move leftwards can be made on to the nose of the first overhang of Pygmalion. Finish directly via two mantelshelves.

**6 Maid's Causeway**  $\text{HS}$  1954  
**25m** Climb easily up some large ledges to the right of the corner and walk leftwards along a shelf past a holly tree. Climb the corner to a small overhang and move out rightwards to climb past some dirty ledges to an earthy slope and a welcome hawthorn.

**7 Twilight of Emporiumism**  $\text{E2 5b}$  1982  
**20m** A reasonably good route which tackles the ob-



vious strenuous crack behind the tree on the traverse of Maids Causeway. It is sustained but well-protected.

**8 Rigelade**  $\text{E3 6a}$  post-1985  
**18m** The rather striking arête in the centre of the crag is gained from the left, passing a peg at two-thirds height.

**9 Prussian Blues**  $\text{E4 6a}$  1985  
**17m** Climb directly up the steep wall between Rigelade and Soft Option, passing the obvious undercut towards the top.

**10 Soft Option**  $\text{E3 5b}$  1985  
**17m** This takes the centre of the steep wall to the left of Saints Passage. Start from the shelf above the grotty corner; move rightwards to a mantelshelf and ascend directly to a triangular niche. A move up from this leads to a traverse up and rightwards to beneath a good flake which is gained with difficulty. Follow this to an overhang, which is taken on its left-hand side to finish.

**11 Saint's Passage**  $\text{S}$  1954  
**13m** The large flake at the right-hand side of the wall is climbed directly with the help of two protruding trees.

**12 Ecclesiastical Exercise**  $\text{VS 4c}$  1983  
**12m** The obvious, steep corner right of Saints Passage gives a worthwhile route.

**13 Danse Macabre**  $\text{E3 5c}$  1989  
**12m** The arête to the right of Ecclesiastical Exercise is gained from the crack on the right-hand wall. Several tricky moves lead past a small sloping ledge to a hard finish. A side-runner in the previous route provides some protection.

## First Ascents

Unknown	<b>Si Sit Prudentia</b>	George Bower
1954 June 11	<b>Maid's Causeway</b>	Bob O Downes, Geoffrey J Sutton
Saints Passage	John M Turner, M J OHara	
1954 Sept. 8	<b>Pygmalion, The Flypaper</b>	John M Turner, P E Evans
1982	<b>Twilight of Emporiumism</b>	Richard Greaves, P Gaunt
1983	<b>Ecclesiastical Exercise</b>	G Foster, D Evans
1984	<b>Mouth Full of Monkey Nuts</b>	Darran Hawkins, Perry Hawkins
1985 Oct. 5	<b>Soft Option, Prussian Blues</b>	Mark Edwards, Richard Greaves
1989 Aug. 9	<b>Danse Macabre</b>	Mark Turnbull, Richard Mackney
1989 Oct. 8	<b>Verbal Narcotics</b>	Mark Turnbull, Andy Crome